

THE FALL OF PARIS.

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ment of Defense remained as stated to the downfall of Paris.

The French Republic.

The Empress, deserted by all but one or two of her most devoted friends, left the Tuilleries on Sunday evening, and in the general excitement escaped from Paris, making her way through Belgium to England, reaching Hastings, where the Prince Imperial had already arrived, on the evening of Thursday, September 8. She was accompanied by M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, of Suez Canal fame, and a single female companion.

With the exit of Eugenie from Paris the Empire vanished, and its adherents united with the Republicans, Orléanists, and all the other political parties, to make a supreme effort at pushing back the invader.

At Lyons, Marseilles, and Bordeaux the Republic was proclaimed almost simultaneously with the movement in Paris, and the transition was complete and practically instantaneous throughout France, the whole country, in the peril of the moment, acquiescing in the self-assumed authority of the eleven Republican Deputies of Paris. In a few days, however, trouble arose in some of the larger cities of the provinces. The socialist Democracy of Lyons and Marseilles were disposed to be troublesome for a time, and indulged in spasmodic outbreaks, but failing to secure the general support of the people, did not create much of a diversion.

On Wednesday, September 8, Minister Washburne, in pursuance of instructions from President Grant, formally recognized the new Government. This action was followed by Switzerland on the 9th. The Spanish Minister, Senor Olazaga, also opened official intercourse with the so-called Republic on the 8th, but misapprehended his instructions, and became involved in such a diplomatic muddle that he was obliged to return to Madrid. The Portuguese Minister entered into diplomatic relations with M. Favre on the 12th, and the representatives of some of the minor American republics also formally recognized the new Government. But Lord Lyons, the British Minister, whose recognition was so coveted, held aloof, having nothing more to do with the Republic than was necessary in the stormy peace movements which ensued, and the speedy investment of Paris soon put an end to all diplomatic movements and drove all the leading ambassadors out of Paris, except Mr. Washburne.

Paris Preparing for Defense.

On September 16, Paris was declared in a state of siege, and a grand exodus at once began, thousands of foreigners leaving the city before the German lines were drawn about it and ingress and egress stopped. The Government of National Defense proceeded about their task of preparing to encounter the advancing foe with great energy. The forts were manned, the ramparts were studded with cannon, and practically the whole population capable of bearing arms was levied en masse into the defensive army under Gen. Trochu. On September 16, the force under arms within the line of the forts was estimated at 438,000 men, including 80,000 regular troops, 30,000 sailors and marines, 20,000 gendarmes, and 318,000 National Guards, of whom 180,000 were Mobs from the provinces.

The Government Moved to Tours.

Before the middle of September there was talk of removing the seat of government to Tours, 130 miles southwest of Paris, and preparations were begun for the accommodation of the Diplomatic Corps there. The administrative staff of the Ministry of the Interior to avoid interruption in the exercise of its functions by the advancing Germans, was the first section of the Government to desert the capital, arriving at Tours on September 13. A number of the leading journals then took the alarm, and were published in Tours after the 18th. Cremerieux, the Minister of Justice, changed his quarters about the same time, discharging also the duties of Minister of War until the arrival of Gambetta. On the 17th, the greater portion of the Diplomatic Corps took up their quarters at Tours, and that city thenceforth, until its capture by the Germans, shared the government with Paris, M. Favre remaining behind to superintend the defense of the capital, while Gambetta, who escaped from Paris in a balloon on October 8th, relieved Cremerieux of the duties of the War Office, and by the exercise of his dual functions as Minister of the Interior and of War, became the virtual Dictator of France outside of Paris. By the 25th of September all communication between the two seats of government was totally suspended, except through the agency of balloons and carrier-pigeons.

Marching on Paris.

The victorious army of Sedan resumed its march on Paris immediately after the surrender of the Emperor. By the 12th of September the German advance had occupied most of the towns and villages on the east and northeast of the capital at a distance of twenty-five miles, a temporary halt being then made to give the advocates of peace an opportunity to accomplish what they could. The small fortress of Laon, 74 miles northeast of Paris, was the first point at which a determined resistance was made, but the town surrendered on the basis of the capitulation of Sedan, on September 11, to avoid threatened destruction. Just as the Prussians were prepared to enter the place, the citadel exploded, through the act of a patriotic fanatic, 350 soldiers of both armies being killed, the French Mobs suffering the most.

The advance on the capital was made in three parallel columns, the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin commanding the northern column, the Crown Prince of Saxony, under the King of Prussia in person, commanding the central column, and the Crown Prince of Prussia the southern column. On the 16th there was a sharp skirmish with General Vinoy's corps, which took place in the immediate vicinity of Paris, between Forts Ivry and Charenon, and another encounter took place on the 19th near Forts Villejeu and Montrouge, in which General Vinoy was defeated with considerable loss. The Bavarians in this engagement took seven cannon and over a thousand prisoners, and drove the French back into their intrenchments. This action completed the investment of Paris, which, by the 23d, was pronounced completely besieged as far as strategical purposes required.

On the 19th an encounter had also taken place at Eosnes, near Orleans, in which an inferior German force was worsted while endeavoring to sever the railway connections of Paris with the south. The small comfort derived from this was, however, dispelled by the fall of Toul, an important fortress a few miles west of Nancy. The garrison made a stout resistance, but succeeded on the 23d, the Germans capturing nearly 3500 prisoners and 245 cannon. The fall of Toul enabled them to con-

plete their railway communications with the east by the most direct and desirable route. This was accomplished on the 29th. On the 37th another terrible blow was dealt the French in the capture of Strasbourg.

The capture of Strasbourg, by which 451 officers and 17,000 men were taken prisoners and the key to the ancient province of Alsace placed in German hands. The investment of Strasbourg had been commenced on the 10th of August, immediately after the battle of Worth, with a force of 30,000 men under the command of the Grand Duke of Baden. The besieging force was soon increased to 69,000 or 70,000, mostly South German troops, under General von Werder, and on the 19th of August the bombardment was opened, to be kept up steadily until General Ulrich, the French commander, was persuaded to put an end to the sufferings of the inhabitants by surrendering just as an assault in force was about to be made.

The Siege of Paris.

The siege of Paris had at last become a stubborn reality, and the Parisians inaugurated that series of sorties which has become not less famous for its pertinacity than for its futility. The first sortie in force was made on September 30th, on the south of the beleaguered capital, against the 5th and 6th Prussian Corps, portions of the Crown Prince's army. The struggle lasted two hours, at the end of which time the French sought shelter under the guns of the forts, with a loss of at least 1000, while the Germans suffered inconceivably.

Meanwhile there had been some futile talk of peace. Lord Lyons and Senor Olazaga had been busy to no purpose, and finally Favre himself tried his hand at it. On the 23d of September M. Favre had visited the Prussian headquarters at Meaux, where he had an interview with Count Bismarck. The only terms to which Bismarck would listen involved the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany. This concession Favre, supported by his colleagues, repudiated, and in a circular issued on the 24th declared that "Paris is exasperated, and will rather bury herself beneath her own ruins than agree to such insolent pretensions." M. Thiers had likewise, on September 13, started on a peace mission, visiting London, Vienna, and St. Petersburg, in the endeavor to interest the neutral powers in the cause of an honorable peace. But his mission was a total failure, and by the end of the month he was homeward bound.

The talk about peace had led the Government of Defense to contemplate the calling of a Constituent Assembly to ratify its terms and establish a permanent and authoritative government, but the failure of the negotiations led the Paris section of the Government to declare the elections postponed indefinitely. The Tours branch of the Government, however, concluded to proceed with the elections, and issued a decree fixing the 16th of October as the date. This action, which was taken on October 1, was reversed on the 9th, and the elections declared postponed until France should be free from invasion. Considerable discontent was manifested, both in Paris and the provincial cities, at this course. Early in October there were serious disturbances in Lyons, and later in the month Marseilles was greatly agitated by the demonstrations of the Red Republicans. Gambetta, escaped from Paris, announced his arrival at Tours on the 9th of October by the first of a series of formidable proclamations, by which cheap method he strove to the last to smother discontent and dispel despair. Gradually the provinces were quieted, before a grand crisis was precipitated by the fall of Metz and the occurrence of serious disturbances in Paris.

The friends of France, meanwhile, took encouragement from the noble manner in which Metz still held out, from several successful sorties from Soissons about the first of October, and from the stout resistance made by the petty fortress of Biche, near the Bavarian frontier. Soissons, however, succumbed on the morning of October 16th, after a terrible destruction of life and property and a most heroic resistance. The Germans, under the command of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, had invested the fortress with a force about 23,000 strong, for three weeks, the destructive bombardment, however, lasting only four days. With the surrender 4725 prisoners and 123 guns were captured, and a second railway line was opened between the army investing Paris and its base of supplies. Even more important, temporarily, was the capture of Orleans.

The Capture of Orleans.

which the Germans entered on the night of October 11, after a struggle lasting from 9 o'clock in the morning until 7 in the evening. The German army, which was commanded by General Von Der Tann, was made up principally of Bavarians, and was greatly superior, in point of numbers, to the French Army of the Loire, then just entering on that famous career upon which the hopes of France were centered so long. The Germans captured 6000 prisoners, drove the French to the left of the Loire, and threw the Government at Tours into a fright, by threatening to swoop down upon that city.

The Fall of Metz.

But a still more terrible blow was impending. On the 27th of October, all France was convulsed with despondence and despair by the capitulation of the "Virgin City" of Metz, through whose gates a hostile army had never before marched. A German force of about 300,000 men, under Prince Frederick Charles, had completely invested the fortress after Bazaine had been driven to the walls at Gravelotte, on the 18th of August. The investment partook of the character of a blockade rather than a siege, the policy of the German commander being to repulse all sorties merely, and leave the rest to famine. On the 23d of September, Marshal Bazaine had made a serious attempt at breaking through the German lines, following up this futile assault on the 24th of September, and again on the 27th. On October 3 there was another sortie, and still another on the 7th, most formidable and desperate of all, but equally unsuccessful. During the latter month, Bazaine figured occasionally in the negotiations for peace, but without any concert with the Republican Government, from whom he received no official communications, and to whom he was indebted for no pretense of an attempt at relief. General Bourbaki also engaged in the peace movement, passing, by permission, through the German lines and holding a conference with the Empress which came to naught.

There was anything but harmony in the councils of the generals shut up in the beleaguered fortress. It was believed that Metz could have held out much longer, but the policy of Bazaine prevailed, and on the morning of the 27th he capitulated, to be greeted throughout France, and especially by Minister Gambetta and other members of the Government of Defense, as a traitor for so doing.

The capitulation of Metz was even more disastrous than that of Sedan. The Germans came into possession of 33 miles, 541 field and 300 siege guns, 65 mitrailleurs, and 399,000 rations and stores, in addition to about 155,000 prisoners who swelled the ranks of the captured French host to about 255,000. Among the prisoners were three Marshals of the Empire, Bazaine, Canrobert, and Le Boeuf, and Generals L'Amiral, Frossard, De Caen, Coffiniers, Soleille and Le Brun, and 37 other division and 100 brigadier-generals. But most important of all was the capture of the city itself, and its restoration to the dominion of Germany, to which it had belonged centuries before. The event was, indeed, one of such signal proportions that King William celebrated it by bestowing the unusual rank of Field Marshal upon Prince Frederick Charles, on October 29, the Crown Prince being complimented with a similar promotion, while General von Moltke, whose directing genius presided over all, was lifted from a simple baron to the rank of a count.

About this grand turning point in the history of the war also clustered the capitulation, on October 24, of the important city of Schlestadt, below Strasbourg, with 2100 prisoners and 120 cannon, and the occupation of Dijon, 190 miles southeast of Paris, on the 30th.

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Serious Disturbances in Paris.

The news of the fall of Metz was carried into Paris by M. Thiers, who had no sooner returned from his unsuccessful tour of the European courts than he resumed his efforts in behalf of at least a temporary cessation of hostilities. M. Thiers was suffered by the German authorities to enter Paris in the interest of an armistice, and as soon as news of the terrible disaster on the Moselle was generally known and admitted by the Government, and the announcement made that M. Thiers had entered the city to arrange for an armistice, the temporary reaction was tremendous. The discontented elements of the population were headed by Gustave Flourens, the blatant demagogue who had gained so much notoriety by his participation in the disturbances attending the funeral of Victor Noir during the previous winter, and had, like Victor Hugo, returned to Paris with the republic. By his rampant course he had succeeded in disgusting and alienating even Rochefort, his former coadjutor on La Marseillaise, and he seized upon this opportune moment for an attempt at supplanting the existing government. On the 31st of October, Flourens threw all Paris into a terrible tumult by invading with his adherents the Hotel de Ville, and making prisoners of several members of the Government. The Mobs, the National Guard, and the sober-minded element of the population came to the rescue, and with their assistance the mob was dispersed before any serious mischief had been done. The Government, immediately after the suppression of the Red Republican demonstration, made an appeal to the 63,638 Paris, who, by a vote of 557,996 yeas to 62,638 nays, declared their confidence in the constituted authorities.

Red Republican Disturbances at Marseilles. Following closely upon the disturbances in Paris, there was a serious commotion at Marseilles, in which city the Red Republican element, thoroughly organized through the agency of the International Workingmen's Association, had from the first been formidable in numbers and pretensions. M. Alphonse Gent, who had been despatched by Gambetta to succeed Esquros as Government Administrator, was assaulted on his arrival in the city on November 2d, and seriously wounded by a pistol shot. The proclamation of an independent Southern Republic followed on Nov. 3, but the demonstration did not assume formidable proportions, and at a municipal election held a few days afterwards, the Red Republicans mustered but 8000 votes, against 39,000 in the interest of order.

Further Disturbances to the Army of the Loire. On the 7th the assault on the Army of the Loire was renewed by Prince Frederick Charles and the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, and after four days' severe fighting around Beaugency, a few miles southwest of Orleans, the French were driven back upon Blois and Tours, with great loss. Vendome, to the west of Orleans, was also occupied, the French retiring in the direction of Le Mans, 113 miles southwest of Paris, and the most important railway station west of the capital. Here General Chanzy made a halt, and was strongly reinforced before he again confronted the enemy. Tours, the abandoned deputy capital, was temporarily occupied by the Germans on December 20, without serious opposition.

On January 6 the German forces beyond Vendome encountered two corps of the Army of the Loire, which had again made an advance. A severe engagement ensued resulting in the defeat of the French, who retreated to the westward. Prince Frederick Charles, who was in command of the Germans, followed Chanzy closely, and on the 10th and 11th terrific engagements ensued near Le Mans, ending in the total rout of the Army of the Loire and its practical destruction. The Germans lost 177 officers and 2348 men killed and wounded, while the French, besides their killed and wounded, lost 22,000 unwounded prisoners. Thus the "forlorn hope" of Paris vanished.

Operations in the North.

General Manteuffel had occupied Rouen on the 4th of December, after several encounters with the army of Faidherbe, and left General von Goeben in command there. At the same time the Germans withdrew from Amiens and made a feint upon Havre. Serious fighting was renewed on the 22d and continued on the 23d, the French being defeated, and the year closed with Manteuffel in pursuit of Faidherbe's retreating army. On the 2d, and again on the 3d of January, there were severe engagements near Bapaume, 35 miles northwest of Amiens, in which Faidherbe claimed the victory; but, if such it was, it was a fruitless one. After receiving heavy reinforcements, Faidherbe resumed the offensive, but on the 19th, after an obstinate fight of seven hours, was driven into St. Quentin, 40 miles east of Amiens, by General von Goeben, who had succeeded Manteuffel in the chief command in the north. St. Quentin was subsequently abandoned by the French, who retreated, in a totally demoralized condition, on Cambrai, 30 miles north, to which place the Germans at once laid siege; and thence to the southwest, on Arras, Douai, and Lille, inundating the country to prevent effective pursuit. The disasters to the Army of the North were fairly on a par with those sustained by the Army of the Loire at Le Mans, the French loss being over 15,000, of whom 9000 were unwounded prisoners. The German loss was officially reported at 94 officers and 3000 men.

On the 9th of January, the fortress of Peronne, between Amiens and St. Quentin, had been captured, with 3000 prisoners, after the town was nearly destroyed by bombardment.

After the fall of Strasbourg, General von Werder had proceeded to the South in the direction of Belfort, at the head of a considerable force. The badly-disciplined troops of Garibaldi and his two sons had been operating in the southern section of the Vosges for some time, without doing much damage or achieving many laurels. On November 26 and 27, they were routed by von Werder at Pasques, after which the latter proceeded to Belfort, to strengthen the besieging force. The fortress had been invested on November 3, and on the 16th and 23d the garrison had indulged in unsuccessful sorties. On December 18, a severe engagement took place at Nuits, 15 miles S. S. W. of Dijon, lasting five hours and ending in the capture of the town.

About the middle of December a formidable army under General Bourbaki was despatched to the Vosges, to confront Von Werder and raise the siege of Belfort. Dijon, which had been occupied the second time by the Germans on the 30th of October, was evacuated on the approach of the French, and occupied by Garibaldi's forces on December 29. On January 9 Bourbaki was defeated at Villersexel, 30 miles W. S. W. of Belfort, and on the 15th Von Werder successfully resisted a fierce assault on his position south of Belfort. Bourbaki renewed the attack on the 16th and 17th, but sustained a damaging defeat on both occasions, with heavy loss. He then withdrew his battered army from the immediate vicinity of the German forces, and contented himself for some time with outpost skirmishing.

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Active operations, however, were subsequently resumed in the neighborhood of Dijon, near which place the Germans were repulsed on January 22 by the Garibaldians; after a severely contested fight, according to French reports. But this success could not materially affect the critical position of Bourbaki, who found himself between the army of Von Werder, around Belfort, and a force under Manteuffel, who was hastening to the latter's assistance and to assume the chief command in the East.

Minor Military Movements.

On December 13, the minor stronghold of Pfalsburg, in the Vosges, 25 miles northwest of Strasbourg, capitulated, after a protracted siege which had commenced on August 14, immediately after the battle of Worth. Nearly 3000 prisoners and 63 cannon were captured with the fortress.

On December 14, Montmedy, 35 miles north of Verdun, surrendered, after a severe bombardment which effected a breach in the walls. The first engagement in the neighborhood had occurred on September 8, after which the town had been closely invested, the garrison making sorties on October 11 and November 16 and 17, but without any success except on the last occasion. The Germans captured 3000 prisoners and 65 cannon with the fortress.

The next minor capture of importance by the Germans was Metzler, 50 miles northeast of Rheims, and near the scene of MacMahon's crushing defeat in September. The siege commenced immediately after the latter event, and the defense made by the garrison was heroic and unflinching. On September 26, an armistice of forty-eight hours was granted for the removal of the wounded; the garrison made a determined sortie on November 14; and on November 30, the Germans were twice repulsed in attacks on the town. On January 2, however, the fortress capitulated, with 2000 prisoners and 106 cannon.

Next came the fate of Longwy near the Belgian frontier, 35 miles north-northwest of Metz. Here the Germans again encountered a determined resistance. On January 21 the garrison made a successful sortie, dismounting several of the besiegers' guns and forcing them to withdraw their batteries to a greater distance. But on the 25th, the town at last fell into the hands of the Germans, with 3000 prisoners and 300 cannon.

Returning to the siege of Paris, we find Von Moltke politely informing Trochu of the disasters to the Army of the Loire and the reoccupation of Orleans, in a note dated December 5th. Trochu declined to verify the fact by sending one of his officers through the lines, under a proffered safe conduct, and prepared for another sortie. On the 21st, Vinoy and Ducrot again ventured beyond the range of the forts, Vinoy assaulting the German lines on the east of the city, and Ducrot on the south. It is said that 100,000 French troops participated in these sorties, which were comprehensive in plan, but feeble in execution and easily repulsed.

Thus far, the German army around the capital had been content in strengthening its lines and repelling the sorties of the garrison. But by Christmas it was prepared for more exciting work, and on the 27th the bombardment of Fort Avron, the most advanced of the French outworks east of Paris, was commenced. The French guns were silenced, and a Saxon detachment on advancing found the works abandoned. The Germans were thus established within the outer works of the French, at one of the weakest points along their line of defense, and within shelling distance of the city itself. The beginning of the end was at hand. To trace the progress of the bombardment in detail is as yet impossible; the barest outline must suffice.

The abandonment of Fort Avron rendered the evacuation of other advanced posts in the neighborhood necessary, and the whole line of forts to the east was soon reduced to comparative silence.

On January 5 the bombardment of the southern forts was opened, and continued with destructive effect, the fiery cordon being extended from the south to the north by the opening of the German batteries upon St. Denis on the 23d. Gradually the aim of the besiegers' guns was directed upon the city itself, and shells fell almost in the heart of the city, creating consternation and making havoc with life and property. The first shells fell within the enceinte on the 5th, and on the 8th the fire upon the city itself became well directed and continuous. In a circular issued on the 15th, the Government of Defense protested against the bombardment, because it was not preceded by a special warning to remove non-combatants and characterized it as "an act coldly calculated to devastate the city and strike terror to the citizens by murder and incendiarism."

Sorties, however, were again resorted to on the 13th, on the northeast, south, and southwest of the city, but, like all that had preceded them, they were unavailing. A more formidable sortie was made from Fort Mont Valerien, on the west, on the morning of the 19th. The French attacked the Germans in immense force, but after a terrible conflict, lasting six hours, their left was broken and they were driven back. The French loss was so great that they were compelled to ask an armistice of forty-eight hours, to collect their wounded and bury their dead, which was tacitly granted by the German pickets, although refused by the commanding general.

The result of this unsuccessful attempt at diverting the enemy from their destructive work on the other side of the city was extremely depressing upon the army and people of Paris. Both soldiers and citizens at last abandoned their faith in Trochu, and the latter tendered his resignation, to appease the popular clamor, and leave the Government of Defense at liberty to meet the emergency as best they could. The Council of Ministers, on the afternoon of the 21st, accepted Trochu's resignation as Military Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris, General Vinoy being appointed his successor. Trochu was retained, however, as Civil Governor of the city and nominal President of the Government of Defense. Gau Vinoy accepted the command, on condition that stern measures should be adopted to repress the disturbances which were threatened by the Red Republican element. There was immediate op-

portunity for enforcing his repressive policy. On the night of Saturday, January 21, a disorderly mob assailed the Mazas prison, in which Gustave Flourens, Felix Pyat, and other revolutionary characters were incarcerated. They succeeded in liberating the prisoners, and on the following day a demonstration was made upon the Hotel de Ville, with the avowed object of deposing the Government. The crowd was not a large one, but their momentary success would have precipitated a crisis, and decisive measures were taken to avert a serious catastrophe. Five of the rioters and spectators were killed, and eighteen wounded, and this small expenditure of blood sufficed to suppress the demonstration and disperse the crowd.

The end was at hand. The new year was ushered in by the one hundred and fifth day of the siege. Saturday, January 23, extended the period of investment and isolation to one hundred and thirty-three days. For fully nineteen weeks Paris had been shut in from the great world of which it claimed to be the capital and centre. During the whole of this extended period a population of two millions had subsisted upon the stock of provisions accumulated in expectation of a siege. Not a loaf of bread or an ounce of meat had found its way into the city from without. Horse-flesh in time took the place of the ordinary animal food of civilized nations, and when this too began to fail, dogs, cats, and rats were brought into requisition. Even these unsavory aliments failed at last, and the people, long inured to unsatisfied hunger, were at last on the very verge of starvation. Terrible miseries of death were falling in the heart of the city; flourens was again loose, and at the head of the mob which respected neither life, nor property, nor principle; the last "supreme effort" at a sortie had been the most signal failure of all—the end had come at last.

On the evening of Monday, January 23, M. Jules Favre, whose belief in the impregnability of Paris against the combined assaults of famine, fire, and fusillade had undergone a change, arrived at Bismarck's headquarters in Versailles, to propose capitulation. With the course of the negotiations we are not yet familiar, because of the conflicting and unauthenticated reports which have been borne across the ocean by the cable. There was naturally a hovering over the terms of the surrender, and several consultations were necessary before they could be arranged satisfactorily to both sides. On Thursday, the 26th, Favre again met Bismarck, being accompanied by M. Dorian, who had just succeeded General Letto as Minister of War, and M. Picard, the Minister of Finance. On Friday, the 27th, another conference resulted in the settlement of the terms, and the fall of Paris was consummated on the following day, when the signatures of Bismarck and Favre were affixed to the capitulation and an armistice of three weeks' duration.

The War on the Ocean—A Greater Farce than at the Time of the Declaration of War by France against Prussia, the relative strength of the two powers on the ocean was as follows:

Table comparing naval forces of France and Germany. Columns include: Number of vessels, Guns, Horse-power, and other specifications for both nations.

Number of vessels... 401 (France), 102 (Germany). Guns... 3,045 (France), 620 (Germany). Horse-power... 22,627 (France), 10,710 (Germany). Of the French fleet of 401 vessels, 62 were iron-clads, 264 screw steamers, 62 paddle-wheel steamers, and 113 sailing vessels. The German total of 102 vessels consisted of 7 iron-clad screw steamers, 9 frigates and corvettes, 27 gunboats, and 59 sailing vessels. The French fleet was manned, when on a peace footing, by 2218 officers and 39,346 sailors, the total being swelled by the men of all grades and in all capacities attached to the service to 74,403; while there was provision for increasing this formidable force to about 170,000 in time of war. The German fleet, on the contrary, was manned by only 216 officers and 3500 seamen and boys.

This great disparity, as a matter of course, drove Germany from the ocean, and rendered a naval contest of any importance impossible from the outset. It likewise sufficed almost to annihilate the foreign commerce of Germany without the firing of a gun, while that of France remained practically secure from molestation. But Germany apprehended a greater misfortune even than this—a descent by a formidable sea upon her coast, and the devastation of her seaboard, if not an actual invasion of her territory. To guard against such disasters, extensive precautionary measures were taken; the buoys and lights were all removed, rendering the approaches to the coast exceedingly hazardous; the mouths of the Weser, Elbe, and Oder, and the harbors of Kiel and Stralsund, were protected by chains, sunken vessels and torpedoes; and two formidable armies were held in reserve—one of 108,000 men, under the command of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, on the Baltic coast, near the mouth of the Oder, and another of 58,000, under General von Falkenstein, near the mouth of the Elbe.

Previous to the outbreak of the war, the United States had become entirely dependent upon the North German lines of steamers for postal facilities with Europe, and an effort was made by our Government to secure the exemption of their steamers from capture or interference, which favor the Imperial Government declined to grant; and in consequence of the refusal, the North German steamers plying between New York and Bremen and Hamburg were obliged to seek safety in home or neutral ports.

Immediately upon the declaration of war great activity was displayed by France in preparing her navy for service against the enemy, Cherbourg being the natural point of departure for the armor-plated fleet, from which the most effective service was expected. The first division of the fleet which rendezvoused at Cherbourg took its departure for the Baltic on July 24th, under Vice-Admiral Bonet-Willameux, to be followed soon after by the second division under Rear-Admiral Penhoet. Previous to sailing Admiral Bonet-Willameux's fleet was honored by an unexpected visit from the Empress Eugenie, who came to bring the proclamation of the Emperor and bid adieu in the name of France. Subsequently, the French fleet of the Mediterranean, under Vice-Admiral Fourichon, who became Minister of Marine under the Government of Defense after the downfall of Napoleon, was despatched to the North Sea. It was by Admiral Fourichon that the proclamation, dated August 13, was issued announcing to the world the blockade of the whole North German coast, and granting a delay of only ten days to enable neutral vessels to complete their cargoes and leave the embargoed ports.

Before entering the Baltic Admiral Bonet-Willameux captured two Prussian gunboats at the mouth of the Elbe, and tried the range of his guns on Wilhelmshaven, but without endeavoring to effect a landing. At Copenhagen the French fleet was received with great enthusiasm, and it was generally thought at the time

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